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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES ANDREA KERSTEN TO SERVE AS CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CIVILIAN OFFICE OF POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the nomination of Andrea Kersten to serve as the next Chief Administrator of Civilian Office of Police Accountability (COPA). This appointment is subject to City Council approval.

“Andrea Kersten is a longtime and dedicated public servant who brings a lifetime of relevant experience and subject matter expertise to the role of Chief Administrator,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “During her time as interim-Chief Administrator, Andrea has done incredible work leading the Civilian Office of Police Accountability, including completing the backlog of inherited open investigations of Chicago’s prior civilian oversight agency, IPRA. At a time when independent and civilian-led police accountability have never been more important, I have the utmost confidence in Andrea’s ability to lead COPA with transparency, integrity, and dedication to the office’s important role.”

As Chief Administrator, Kersten will lead COPA’s mission to provide a just and efficient means to fairly and timely conduct investigations within its jurisdiction; determine whether allegations of police misconduct are well-founded; identify and address patterns of police misconduct; and make policy recommendations to improve the Chicago Police Department, thereby reducing incidents of police misconduct.

“It is a privilege to be selected by Mayor Lightfoot for this role and I look forward to appearing before city Council,” said Interim Administrator Kersten. “Police reform, specifically civilian oversight, is one of the more critical issues of our time and of significant importance to all residents of our city, civilian and sworn. If confirmed, I will continue to serve guided by the consent decree, city ordinance and uphold COPA’s core values: integrity, transparency, independence and timeliness.”

Kersten has over 15 years of experience working in the City of Chicago, most recently serving as COPA’s Interim Chief Administrator. In this role, she is responsible for agency-wide decisions and the management of the 140 member



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staff. Additionally, she oversees the advancing COPA's mission and raising its public profile through communications with external stakeholders, impacted families, members of the media, and City Council. Prior to serving as the Interim Chief, Kersten served as Deputy Chief and then Chief of Investigative Operations, where she was responsible for all aspects of investigative operations and the management of approximately 80 investigative staff members. In this role she also maintained investigative productivity during the pandemic as staff worked remotely and oversaw COPA's response to the civil unrest in the summer of 2020, creating a specialized unit to handle its most high-profile cases.

Before joining COPA, she served as a Supervising Staff Attorney with the Independent Police Review Authority (IPRA), the Lead Administrative Law Judge at Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and spent seven years at the Cook County State's Attorney's Office as the Assistant State's Attorney.

Andrea is a graduate of North Park University, where she earned her B.A. in Sociology with a minor in Psychology and The John Marshall Law School, where she earned her Juris Doctor.

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